



## Preparedness and Prevention Prevail During Year 2000 Transition Period

Fire and emergency service providers around the nation kept the Y2K vigil throughout the last weekend of the millennium, hoping for the best but prepared for the worst.

United States Fire Administration Chief Operating Officer, Kenneth O. Burris, Jr. remarked on the positive outcomes of Y2K contingency planning and interagency response drills, *"Y2K was a situation requiring planning and preparation at every level. Clearly fire and emergency service providers across the nation identified the needs of their communities and met the challenge. Their actions will pay off as communities meet the demands of the new millenium. The lack of any credible incident attributed to Y2K at the basic street delivery of services, is concrete evidence of their efforts."*

FEMA's United States Fire Administration thanks all the representatives of fire departments and public safety answering points who responded to our surveys regarding Y2K preparations and readiness. Your input was the core of our informational newsletters. By sharing ideas with us, you shared them with all your colleagues across the country and helped to insure that everyone was ready for the Y2K challenge. A special thanks goes to the National Association of State Fire Marshals and the National Emergency Number Association (NENA). These organizations were USFA's partners in early Y2K awareness activities. Mark Adams, Executive Director of NENA, worked with USFA staff through the rollover weekend and helped answer technical questions and debunk rumors about 911 services. This was tremendous display of national teamwork. Thank you all.

### **FIRE SAFETY FACT SHEETS**

**FREE** from USFA Publications Center @

<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/y2k/y2kfs.htm>

<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/safety/sheets.htm>

Fax orders (301) 447-1213

## Fire and Emergency Service Providers 'Watch 2000' Issues

Fire service providers are concerned that residents who stored gasoline or other fuels in preparation for Y2K perils could be sitting on a time bomb. Many people purchased limited amounts of cooking fuels that can be safely stored in their originally purchased containers, under proper environmental conditions. Others, who stockpiled gasoline and heating fuels in makeshift drums or containers, pose an enormous life safety hazard to the community and responders.

Texas State Fire Marshal, G. Mike Davis reminds citizens, "It's a time bomb out there. One barrel of gas is like 25 sticks of dynamite." His office provided media releases to educate and encourage citizens to contact their local fire authority for fuel safety and disposal concerns.

What can be done? Use community programs to distribute information and "bring home" the word about safe storage. Encourage citizens to call their local fire authorities for information about safe disposal/removal. Post notices and non-emergency fire department numbers in highly visible areas in grocery markets, churches, liquor stores, recreational facilities, theatres, senior centers and any place where people are stuck waiting in line with idle time to read! Materials such as the USFA Fire Safety Fact Sheets addressing winter and other risk issues can be made available throughout your community.

Find out what else is going on to build prepared communities at these Internet sites:

<http://www.fema.gov/pte/prepare.htm>

<http://www.fema.gov/impact/>

<http://www.fema.gov/ Americaburning/>

<http://www.nemaweb.org/emac/index.cfm>

**[www.usfa.fema.gov/y2k/](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/y2k/)**

**(301) 447-1328**

**USFA Y2K INFORMATION OFFICE**

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"Just imagine what we could accomplish worldwide if we all came together and tried to make each community in the world disaster resistant." - James Lee Witt

### AZ City of Sierra Vista Fire & Police

At the EOC, there were several public work trucks ready with four-way stop signs in the event the traffic signals failed. The community was broken down into four areas where satellite communication systems were set up. These were motor homes staffed and with communications equipment in case the public needed quick access to the 911 service, in the event 911 failed.

'Y2K baskets', containing handy away from home and office items, were made up for emergency service workers on duty.

### WA Tacoma Fire and Rescue

We are proud of our community. They collectively behaved responsibly. They were prepared, and prevented a large potential disaster from happening. Our colleagues in the Law Enforcement community deserve a lot of praise. Every power substation was guarded by at least one law enforcement officer. They were in our EOC for good interagency cooperation and they had a mobile field force in ready reserve, just in case.

Y2K was not a disaster; however, it was a wonderful planning tool for every community in America to prepare for their next disaster. The training and interagency cooperation will last for years. That, in and of itself is invaluable. J. Sinclair, Division Chief

### OH Greentown Volunteer Fire Department

The community of Greentown, Ohio prepared for Y2K related problems. Area churches led the way by establishing a task force. This led to the first community disaster planning committee. They are now better equipped and organized to handle a community disaster. Even on a smaller scale, the task force has enabled the churches to participate when extra help is needed under the direction the fire department. //

**Q:** Now that our fire department has successfully entered the new millenium with no Y2K computer problems, what should we do from this point on?

**A:** Stay vigilant! Contrary to popular belief, the threat of computer related problems is not over; rather it is just beginning. The new millenium ushers in a new era of terrorism: *cyber-terrorism*, which the FBI defines as *the use of computing resources to intimidate or coerce others*. Cyber-terrorism is a real danger to be looked into by not only computing professionals, but anyone who uses a computer network of any kind.

**Q:** My fire department does not use a computer network. Should we still be concerned with cyber-terrorism?

**A:** Yes. On July 15, 1996, President Clinton signed Executive Order 13010 establishing the President's Commission on Critical Infrastructure Protection. The Commission's report fifteen months later revealed that not only is the combination of electricity, communications and computers necessary to the survival of the U.S.; but also that each component is extremely vulnerable to cyber terrorism. The resources to launch a cyber attack are commonplace in the world. A computer and a connection to the Internet are all that are really needed to create an attack. Additionally, the public and private sectors are relatively unaware of how much their welfare and daily activities depend on computers. Electricity, and telecommunications are found in virtually every community in this country – and are therefore susceptible to cyber-terrorist attacks.

**Q:** Some of our department members think that we made a 'big to-do out of nothing' and that preparing for Y2K was a waste of money and time. Is that true?

**A:** No! For many fire departments, the night of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1999 was the first time they have actually put into place their Emergency Operations Plan. This 'dry run' will undoubtedly prove beneficial for real disasters that might occur within those communities in the future. //